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Makers of the Award-Winning Cascade Server content management software

CEO Insights - Real-Time Collaboration Using Web 2.0 and Consumer Social Media Tools

Friday, March 21st, 2008 at 9:00am -- Elizabeth Starkey

Hannon Hill founder and CEO David Cummings recently spoke at [Tallahassee's TechExpo 1.0](#) on the topic of [Marketing Streamlined: Using Social Media and Web 2.0 Tools for Facilitating Community Collaboration](#). We spoke with David to learn more about his fascinating presentation on the collaborative benefits of Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, and RSS feeds. Elizabeth: What social media tools do you feel are currently making the biggest impact on online collaboration and in what ways? David: Some of the biggest ones right now are the blogs and the wikis. Blogs are great for publishing quick, informal pieces of content, opinion pieces, commentary on industry happenings, and what not. And then on the wiki side is the idea that there are these collaborative pages of content that are free-form, obviously with [Wikipedia](#) being the greatest example out there. This idea that people can collaborate and update information in real time and share that removes a lot of the overhead and structure that was typically inherent in sharing Microsoft Word documents, and having file shares, and only having one person be able to edit content at a time. A wiki really takes all those types of friction that occurred previously and makes it much more seamless for the collaboration to occur. Elizabeth: What are some unique ways in which you have seen these innovations utilized? David: Well, of course, on the consumer side and the public-facing side, Wikipedia is phenomenally successful. Then you also have, on the blogging side, companies like [Blogger](#), which is now part of [Google](#), really making it so that anybody can do a blog. If you can send email in a web browser, you have the capabilities to manage and update your online diary, which is essentially what a blog is. The collaboration comes in by making it really easy to publish the content, but then also having the comments section on the blogs so people can actually comment on and discuss the opinion piece or whatever was posted in that blog entry. And then in the next level of collaboration items in terms of comments are things like ratings. You'll see systems where you can rate information. [Amazon.com](#) does a really good job of this, allowing you to rate different products on their website, and then that information is shared back with the community. Amazon.com has a very strong network effect of people that contribute back to it, and then when you look for a new book or a new movie, and you look at the ratings on Amazon.com and you read the comments about it, it makes for a much more compelling site to visit on a regular basis. Elizabeth: How have you personally used these social media tools, and what results have you witnessed? David: I've used Wikipedia. I've actually edited a few entries over the past few years. I have my own personal blog at [DavidCummings.org](#), and it's powered by

Blogger. I really do this as an exercise to use other tools out there, and experience them, and see what I like and don't like about them so I can have a greater awareness and understanding and use that insight to contribute back to the Hannon Hill products.

Elizabeth: How can one prevent the misuse of such tools within an organization?

David: This is a tough one. In a professional organization, I don't think there's too much risk for misuse. If you expose it to the public, then yes, you will definitely have to moderate the comments potentially. You'll definitely have to add filters or double-check information that's posted to your wiki or your blog comments and make sure that it's appropriate for a professional setting. In our experience and in my personal experience in the professional setting, we haven't really seen much in the way of misuse of these types of tools.

Elizabeth: In what potential direction do you see emerging social media innovations taking in the near future?

David: I think this is an interesting trend because these really came out of consumer tools like Wikipedia, again more of a consumer tool, and Blogger, [TypePad](#), or [Movable Type](#), again very consumer-ish. This is interesting compared to some of the historical innovations that have occurred, for example, the [Blackberry](#) and the idea of checking your email or the internet on your phone. That was really driven out of the business side of innovation, whereas on the Web 2.0 and the collaboration front, many of these are consumer tools. Using [Flickr](#) or using [del.icio.us](#) or using Blogger or Wikipedia are very much from the consumer side that are going very quickly into the business side, and they're already on the business side for a lot of products and a lot of companies. I think that's really interesting from a big picture point of view. I see that adoption accelerating. When more and more people use them on the consumer side, they spread. Even social networking sites like [Facebook](#) and [MySpace](#) have the business equivalents of them, like [LinkedIn](#). I think that growth is going to continue to occur, and it's going to be a bottom-up where people use them on the consumer side and then go into their workplaces or into their business settings and they want similar types of tools for their business collaboration.

Elizabeth: Do you have anything else you'd like to share about this topic?

David: I think it's a very fascinating topic. It's something that we spend a lot of time on here at Hannon Hill, working on making sure, from a content management system point of view, and really just being a part of the web ecosystem, that we understand what's going on and we use what's going on, and we make sure our product fits in extremely well with different initiatives that people have, both by having the functionality native in the product as well as integrating with best-of-breed systems.

Elizabeth: Thank you for speaking with us and sharing your valuable insights.

David: Great, thank you!

Category

- Commentary

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